BECAUSE THEY MUST: THREE EXPERIENCES OF FORCED MIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

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Dedication

This work is lovingly dedicated to Emil Gilles, who so heroically helped others in times of need, at risk of his own life, and to his wife and four children who have always stood so devotedly beside him; to Francisco Marcos, who was forced to leave childhood behind at such an early age, and his mother, Doña Lolita, whose selfless love ensured that he would live to see and enjoy adulthood; and to Wayne Lee, who searched beyond known horizons to find the opportunity he deserved to have, his sister and her family who took care of him, and in memory of his parents who sought a better future for their youngest son.

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Contents

Apologia

Americans tend to generalize about immigrants[1] probably because they usually live apart from members of their local immigrant community and, as a result, do not know much about them as individuals. Due to this lack of familiarity, they are unlikely to know about the wealth of experience, broad world view, and cultural diversity immigrants bring to their adopted homeland. Furthermore, and most interestingly for the purposes of this study, they are also unlikely to know that some of the immigrants who now call this country home were *forced* migrants—people who had little or no choice but to leave their homeland. This thesis will tell two such stories.

The three largest immigrant groups that come to the United States are: (a) people with specialized work skills,[2] (b) individuals who are sponsored by family members or because they have immediate relatives who are U.S. citizens,[3] (c) and refugees and asylees[4]—also known as forced migrants (Wood 1994, 607). The United States has also opened its ports to another group that most people usually do not consider when discussing immigration: migrant students. The number of migrant students to the United

[1] Throughout this work I will use the terms migrate and immigrate and migrant and immigrant interchangeably.

[2] Of 1,042,650 immigrants granted permanent U.S. residency in 2010, 148,343 of them were in the country on employment-based preferences status (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2011, 20–21).

[3] Of 1,042,650 immigrants granted permanent U.S. residency in 2010, 214, 589 of them were in the country on family-sponsored preference status; 476,414 of them were in the United States on immediate relatives of U.S. citizens status (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2011, 21–22).

[4] Of 1,042,650 immigrants granted permanent U.S. residency in 2010, a combined total of 136,291of them were refugees and asylees (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2011, 24).

States has grown steadily since WWII, beginning as a trickle, growing by leaps and bounds during the last two decades, and peaking each year through the first decade of this century. This thesis will feature one such story.

The first group of interest to study is forced migrants[5] or refugees and asylees. Forced migrants are people or groups of people who either choose to leave their homeland for their own well-being or because they are forced to flee without choice. Forced migration may take place as a result of political instability, war, persecution, economic decline, ecological crises, genocide, ethnic and religious conflicts, or any combination of life-threatening circumstances (Wood 1994, 615).

There are two types of forced migrants, anticipatory refugees and acute refugees. Anticipatory refugees, in contrast to acute refugees, usually know in advance that they will have to leave their homeland. They also know that they must leave before the situation (e.g., political, military, or economic instability) deteriorates to the point that they will be unable to leave their country at a later time. Because of their situation, they are likely to have some knowledge of the language they will speak in the destination country, some form of finance, and ideas about how they will re-enter their profession once they are settled in the new environment. Acute refugees, however, are less fortunate. Their situation arises when there is a sudden change and, as a result, they are unable to be selective about where they will go. Generally, acute refugees flee en masse, in individual spurts, or in groups. They are more likely to flee to a nearby country, with the

[5] Of the top 10 countries that accept refugees and asylees, the United States accepts more of them than the other nine countries combined (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2011, 20–23; Patrick 2004, 1).

understanding that they may have to go to another country at a later time (Kuntz 1973, 131–132).

Forced migration became a major issue during the mid-twentieth century, particularly during the years leading up to and in the aftermath of WWII when more than forty million Europeans (displaced persons [DPs]) found themselves without a country (Morawska 2000, 1074–1075).[6] According to U.S. immigration statistics for the year 1950,[7] of the 249,187 migrants who came to the United States that year, 132,810 were refugees (Carter et al. 2006, I-541–I-542, I-548, and I-632). The problem of forced migration, however, did not subside after WWII. Since that time, the United States has become home to two large forced migrant groups, the Vietnamese,[8] who came in search of safety and freedom after the triumph of communism that followed a decades-old civil war, and the Salvadorans,[9] who came to this country to escape the horrors associated with what turned out to be a 12-year civil war. During the 1990s, when civil war and genocide returned to the world stage in the former Yugoslavia (1992–1994)[10] and in Rwanda (civil

[6] Of the top 10 countries that accept refugees and asylees, the United States accepts more of them than the other nine countries combined (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2011, 20–23; Patrick, 2004, 1).

[7] These refugees were granted permanent residency as a result of the Displaced Persons Act of June 25, 1948. The flow of refugee immigrants stemming from this act continued through 1962. The number of refugee immigrants coming to this country as a result of that act peaked between 1950 and 1952 (Carter et al. 2006, I-632–633). Numerous other refugee and asylee acts have been passed since 1948.

[8] In 1980, there were 231,120 Vietnamese immigrants in the United States. By 2006, that number had grown to 1.1 million (Terrazas 2008, 1).

[9] In 1980, there were 94,000 Salvadoran immigrants in the United States; by 1990 that number had increased to 465,000. By 2008, there were approximately 1.1 million Salvadoran immigrants in the United States (Terrazas 2010, 1).

[10] The civil war and genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, during the 1990s, left millions of ethnic Croats, Serbs and Montenegrins without a country. As a result of the conflict, in 1993, there were 1.29 million displaced persons (DPs); in 1994, there were 1.28 million DPs; and in 1995, there were approximately 1.1

war from 1991–1993, genocide in 1994),[11] more forced migrants found their way to the United States as a refuge from chaos and destruction.

Like the number of forced migrants, the number of the second group of interest to this study, migrant students, has grown since the years following WWII. Migrant students fall into two categories: (1) non-immigrants who do not intend to stay in the United States and (2) individuals who have obtained immigrant visas or who are already U.S. residents. Migrant students come to the United States because: (1) some countries have expanded financial aid that allows their citizens to study abroad (e.g., OPEC countries); (2) having a U.S. university degree will increase the likelihood that they will earn a higher income throughout their professional lives; (3) graduate degrees from U.S. universities are considered to be prestigious; and (4) during their time in the United States, they can form an international networking system (Agarwal and Winkler 1985, 510, 513, and 514; Cheng 1995, 268).

Asian students have accounted for a large proportion of migrant students to U.S. educational institutions. During the 1954–1955 academic year, Asians accounted for nearly 42 percent of the 26,433 migrant students attending U.S. educational institutions. The number of Asian migrant students seeking education in the United States grew to 55

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million DPs. The number of DPs in this region did not fall below one million until 1996. The number of ethnic Croats, Serbs, and Montenegrins from this region seeking asylum in the United States grew from 1,887 in 1993 to 250,744 in 1996, slowly diminishing in number each year before dropping to 12,449 in 2002 (UNHCR 2004, 230–231).

[11] After a scarring civil war (1991–1993) followed by genocide (1994), in the after effects of both, in 1997 there were 21,877 internally displaced persons (DPs) in Rwanda. The number of DPs grew to 625,000 in 1998. In1996, nearly 500,000 Rwandans sought asylum in mostly other African countries (on average, the largest number sought refuge in neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo), with a little more than 32,000 seeking refuge in other countries. By 1997, the number dropped, remaining on average round 80,000 per year, before jumping to just over 100,000 in 2005 (UNHCR 2007, 476–477).

percent of the 342,110 migrant students during the 1984–1985 academic year. Between 1960 and 1985, the number of migrant students in the United States increased by nearly tenfold (IIE 2009)!

Into the twenty-first century, the number of migrant students in the United States continues to grow. During the 2008–2009 academic year, international student enrollment in U.S. educational institutions reached an all-time high of 671,616 (269,874 of them were undergraduates, 283,329 of them were graduate students), and 62 percent of them came from Asia (Fischer 2009, 1 and 3). That number was surpassed during the 2010–2011 academic year when the number of migrant students allowed entry into the United States to study at colleges and universities reached an unprecedented total of 723,277 (IIE 2011, 1).

Following are three studies. Each one consists of two sections: a history of the circumstances that led an individual to leave his country (in each study the problems have roots as far back as the period of colonization) and an oral history in which the individual tells why he left his country. The reader must read both sections of each study to understand fully each subject's dilemma.

The subject of the first study was born and raised in Rwanda, Africa, and came to the United States as a result of the state-sponsored genocide that occurred in his homeland. The second subject was raised in El Salvador, Central America, and came to the United States out of the chaos surrounding the civil war and the likelihood of his being forcibly abducted into the civil war by either the Salvadoran military or guerilla forces. The third and final subject in this collection was born and raised in British

colonial Hong Kong and came to the United States in quest of a higher education that he likely would never have been able to receive in his homeland.

Though the first two studies are about forced migrants, the circumstances surrounding them—genocide on one hand and civil war on the other—are different. The third study, that of a migrant student, is different from those of the other two subjects in that his life was in no apparent danger and most of his difficulty had to do with transitioning to a new life in the United States while at an early age.

Indiscriminant Murder: Genocide in Rwanda

In the province of Kibungo, in eastern Rwanda, in the swamp- and pastureland near the Tanzanian border, there's a rocky hill called Nyarubuye with a church where many Tutsis were slaughtered in mid-April of 1994. A year after the killing I went to Nyarubuye with two Canadian military officers. We flew in a United Nations helicopter, traveling low over the hills in the morning mists, with the banana trees like green starbursts dense over the slopes. The uncut grass blew back as we dropped into the center of the parish schoolyard. A lone soldier materialized with his Kalashnikov, and shook our hands with stiff, shy formality. The Canadians presented the paperwork for our visit, and I stepped up into the open doorway of a classroom.

At least fifty mostly decomposed cadavers covered the floor, wadded in clothing, their belongings strewn about and smashed. Macheted skulls had rolled here and there.

The dead looked like pictures of the dead. They did not smell. They did not buzz with flies. They had been killed thirteen months earlier, and they hadn't been moved. Skin stuck here and there over the bones, many of which lay scattered away from the bodies, dismembered by the killers, or by scavengers—birds, dogs, bugs. The more complete figures looked a lot like people, which they were once. A woman in a cloth wrap printed with flowers lay near the door. Her fleshless hip bones were high and her legs slightly spread, and a child's skeleton extended between them. Her torso was hollowed out. Her ribs and spinal column poked through the rotting cloth. Her head was tipped back and her mouth was open: a strange image—half agony, half repose.

We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda
(Gourevitch 1998, 15–16)

Introduction: "God Sleeps in Rwanda"

There is a saying among Rwandans that God found their country to be so beautiful that it was where he chose to sleep each night. A landlocked country, located in central Africa, approximately the size of the U.S. state of Vermont, Rwanda's geographic beauty is hauntingly diverse: green tea, eucalyptus trees, and banana trees grow seemingly without effort from its fertile soil; moors, rainforests, and savannahs comprise the country's landscape; and hilly and mountainous are the adjectives that best describe Rwanda's

topography (Gourevitch 1998, 20; Segal 1964, 4; Straus 2006, 8). Despite these Edenic depictions, the serene beauty of Rwanda's physical landscape belies the bloodletting and political chaos that have made up so much of its recent story.

The bloodletting began in earnest during the three to five years leading up to the country's 1962 independence from Belgium, and has taken place between the country's two largest populations, the Hutus, who, before 1994, comprised eighty-four percent to ninety percent of the population, and the Tutsis, who, before 1994, accounted for approximately nine percent to fifteen percent of the population (Straus 2006, 19).[1] The political chaos that took place during those years was a result of the two factions' disagreement over who should rule the country.

Rwandans appeared to be getting over the effects of a civil war that had placed Tutsi against Hutu from 1990 to 1993 when, on April 6, 1994, an airplane carrying Hutu Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana back from Tanzania was shot down over the nation's capital, Kigali.[2] The assassination was said by hard-line Hutu government elites to be the work of Tutsis, and it served their need as impetus for a campaign of state-sanctioned genocide against Tutsis and against their brother Hutus who did not agree with the killing—which was done mainly by Hutus (Ferroggiaro 2001, 1; Straus 2006, 7 and 41).

The killing that ensued during the 1994 genocide was indiscriminant and was executed in ways that were exceedingly cruel and inhumane: "The violence was low-tech: many perpetrators used ordinary farm tools, such as machetes, clubs, and hoes, to

[1] A third group, the Twas, accounted for approximately one percent of the population (Straus 2006, 19).

[2] Burundi President Cyprien Ntaryamira also died on that flight (Ferroggiaro 2001, document #2).

kill. The violence was public, face-to-face, crowd-enforced, and neighbor sometimes killed neighbor" (Straus 2006, 1).

This act of genocide carried out in Rwanda over an approximate three-month period was one of the most horrific in history. It was the most rapidly paced genocide to occur in the twentieth century (Straus 2006, 41).

A Brief History of Pre-Colonial and Colonial Rwanda

To understand the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, it is necessary to know the facts surrounding the county's history just before, during, and since colonial rule, which account for a little more than the last 100 years of Rwanda's existence.

Before colonization, Rwandans lived under a stable, highly structured political and social order. At the top of the system was a king, who was Tutsi, and the majority of the society under the king was comprised primarily by two groups: Tutsis and Hutus.[3] Neither group was classified on the basis of tribe or ethnicity; rather, the labels of Tutsi or Hutu differentiated people based on their social position in the greater society, which depended on their occupation and wealth. Within the social order, Hutus were generally farmers and, as such, considered to be of an inferior social status; Tutsis were usually herdsmen, an occupation that was accorded a superior social level. Members of each group, however, could change their status: Hutus could become Tutsis or Tutsis could become Hutus, depending on changes in their fortunes or occupations. Prior to colonization, this social order was the norm and intermarriage between Hutus and Tutsis was not uncommon, nor was it looked down upon. Both Hutus and Tutsis spoke and still

[3] See footnote number one.

speak the same language, *Kenyarwanda* (Hintjens 1999, 247; Newberry 1983, 257; Newberry 1978, 17–19; Segal 1964, 4–6; Straus, 2006, 19–20).

During the end of the nineteenth century, as Europeans began colonizing Africa in earnest, Germans were particularly attracted to Rwanda because of its rich soil, its healthy climate, and the fact that the country had a well-organized political structure. In 1899, the German government set up military posts within Rwanda and began governing the colony, though they usually had only a few people stationed there at any given time. In 1916, during World War I, Belgian forces from nearby Congo took possession of Rwanda, and after the war, per the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, the Belgian government was granted possession of both Rwanda and neighboring Burundi. As a result of this decision, Rwanda became a Belgian colony as well as a mandated territory under the aegis of the League of Nations. After World War II (WWII), Rwanda, still under Belgium control, became a United Nations (UN) trust territory (Newberry 1983, 257; Newberry 1978, 18–21; Segal 1964, 6–7; Straus 2006, 207–208).

The Introduction of Bigotry: The Hamitic Hypothesis

Both German and Belgian colonists were extremely impressed with Rwanda's complex, centuries-old social structure. Because it was well run, the Europeans did not make significant changes in the administration of the colony; rather, they made use of the Tutsi-dominant political structure that was already in place to run it (Segal 1964, 7–8).

Because of Tutsi political and social dominance, the Europeans came to believe that the Tutsis were a superior race of leaders and, in that regard, that they possessed European qualities. These beliefs were at the center of a "scientific" theory popular among Europeans that was known as the Hamitic Hypothesis. At the heart of the Hamitic

Hypothesis—a theory that began to evolve around the mid-nineteenth century and that lost its credence after World War II—was the belief that any type of positive achievement made in Africa was attained by Africans who were descended from Ham, son of Noah. Hamitic language-speaking Africans—people who speak non-Semitic languages, such as Berber, Egyptian, and Cushitic—were believed to be descended from Ham and, therefore, superior to other Africans by virtue of their assumed descent from Caucasian-related people. In keeping with this theory, the Europeans believed that the Tutsis had originally migrated to Rwanda, with their cattle, from the north, and through their superior intellect had come to dominate the "less-evolved" Hutus (Merriam-Webster 1996, 525; Sanders 1969, 521–532; Segal 1964, 6; Uvin 1997, 95).[4]

The Belgian colonizers set out to prove these theories by instituting "scientific" tests that they believed proved physical differences between Tutsis and Hutus, such as nose and skull size. However, they took these ideas beyond tests: In 1933, they instituted a national identification (ID) card system that distinguished between Tutsis and Hutus (Hintjens 1999, 252–253), which, in turn, made it appear, at least on paper, as though there was a racial or ethnic difference between Tutsis and Hutus. In essence, the new ID card system, which was a result of accepted belief of the Hamitic Hypothesis (Uvin 1997, 95), created a system of prejudice that had not previously existed in Rwanda. Acceptance of this belief set the foundation for the events that would lead to genocide in Rwanda during the last decade of the twentieth century.

[4] The Hamitic Hypothesis discussed in this study was the latest incarnation of numerous theories that had been evolving for centuries. The earliest theories were based on the work of theologians; the later theories that evolved into the Hamitic Hypothesis discussed in this work were based on works that were believed to contain scientific facts (Sanders 1969, 521–532).

The Path to Rwandan Self-Rule

After WWII, a series of events sparked changes in colonial Rwanda's power structure. First, the UN pressured Belgium to reform the pro-Tutsi power structure through the institution of electoral colleges that would, theoretically, provide a more democratic way to choose advisory councils within the sub-realm of each chieftaincy. Second, and simultaneous with the first change, the Roman Catholic Church, which controlled most schools, began to educate Hutus about democracy, equality, equal opportunity, and the concept of majority rule. Third, and as a result of the first and second events, a new Hutu political class emerged, which, once consolidated and backed by the colonial Belgian government, would be instrumental in replacing the Tutsi power structure (Segal 1964, 8–10).

The years 1959 to 1962 were pivotal to the changes sweeping across Rwanda. In January 1959, Belgium announced that it would hasten the goal of independence of the Belgian Congo, which meant that Tutsis and Hutus could be expected to vie against one another for power, once the Belgians were no longer a force in the area.[5] Approximately six months after the announcement, on July 24, Rwanda's king, Mwami Mutara III, died suddenly and unexpectedly, while visiting Usumbara, Burundi. The king's death, in turn, led to a constitutional crisis at the heart of which was the issue of succession: upon the king's death, the increasingly powerful Hutus wanted to abolish the monarchy and establish a republic whereas the Tutsi traditionalists insisted on maintaining the monarchy. The situation became problematic when Tutsi traditionalists tried to retain

[5] Both Rwanda and Burundi were administered from the Belgian Congo per a 1924 League of Nations mandate (Segal 1964, 7).

political power by quickly installing a new king without first consulting the colonial Belgian government. The problem escalated into violence when, on November 1, 1959, Tutsi militants attacked Hutu leaders, which was followed by Hutu retaliation (Segal 1964, 8–10)

During this time of conflict, in preparation for the expected time of change, three important political parties formed and each soon played a major role in the birth of a new Rwanda. The first of the three parties, the Union National du Ruanda (Rwandan National Union [UNAR]), was a pro-Tutsi-monarchist party. The second party, Parti d'Emancipation des Hutus (Party of the Movement for Hutu Emancipation [PARMEHUTU]), was pro-Hutu and represented the interests of a growing Hutu cultural elite. The third party, Association pour la Promotion Sociale de la Masse (Association for the Social Promotion of the Masses [APROSOMA]), was a Hutu-led organization, which, nevertheless, leaned toward retention of the Tutsi monarchy and reconciliation with UNAR (Segal 1964, 8–10).

In April 1960, a UN Commission of Inquiry called for a conference to be held in Brussels, the purposes of which were (1) to find common ground among members of Rwanda's political parties and other factions and (2) to set a date for Rwanda's first direct elections within the country's local communes. As a result of the elections that followed, PARMEHUTU and APROXOMA won 71 percent of the vote. In October 1960, Grégoire Kayibanda became the country's prime minister (Segal 1964, 10).

On January 28, 1961, a meeting of local leaders and councilors was called by the Kayibanda government. At the meeting, Rwanda was declared a republic, a provisional National Assembly was elected, and a provisional President of the Republic—Grégoire

Kayibanda—was also elected (Segal 1964, 10). Less than two years after the death of Mwami Mutari III, the centuries-old Tutsi monarchy had been abolished.

Rwandan Independence and a New Legacy: Violence and Inequality

On July 1, 1962, Rwanda was granted independence from Belgium (Segal 1964, 11). Thereafter, until the 1994 genocide, Rwandans lived under two republics, both of which were led by Hutus. The first republic was headed by Grégoire Kayibanda, who served as president from 1962 to 1973; the second was led by Juvénal Habyarimana who, as minister of defense during the first republic, gained the presidency after a coup d'état he led deposed Kayibanda, during the summer of 1973. Habyarimana served as head of state for more than 20 years until his death in April 1994 (Prosecutor 2003, 4–5; Uvin 1997, 97).

The beginning of Kayibanda's regime, first as prime minister, then later as president of the new republic, was marked by an escalation in violence. The worst violence came as a result of Rwandan forces' retaliation against raids and attacks launched by Tutsis and their sympathizers—usually a result of UNAR instigation—who lived in exile (Lemarchand 1970, 217; Segal 1964, 11).

During the time of instability leading up to independence from Belgium, more than 100,000 Tutsis and Tutsi sympathizers fled Rwanda and found asylum in Burundi, Congo, Tanganyika, and Uganda. From these countries, the refugees would group and launch raids and attacks across the Rwandan border. (The "invading" Tutsis became known among Hutu hardliners as *inyenzi* [cockroaches], a term that would carry great significance during the 1994 genocide.) One such attack took place on March 25, 1962, which was followed on March 26 and 27, by the Rwandan military's retaliatory killing of

1,000 to 2,000 Tutsis (men, women, and children)—among the remaining 250,000 or so remaining Tutsis—which was followed by the destruction of the Tutsis' homes and the distribution of their belongings among Hutus (Lemarchand 1970, 217–219; Segal 1964, 11).

On December 20, 1963, just one and one-half years after Rwandan independence, a band of exiled Tutsis possessing antiquated weapons invaded Rwanda from neighboring Burundi. Along the way, the exiles rallied hundreds[6] of Tutsi men to their cause, seized a military camp, killed a small number of government soldiers, and, with their growing number, absconded with vehicles and a cache of weapons before being stopped by Rwandan soldiers just fifteen miles outside of the nation's capital city, Kigali. In retaliation, the government arrested prominent Tutsi political leaders and Hutus who were opposed to the regime, all of whom lived in Rwanda; some of them were killed, others were brutalized and then set free. These actions were followed by a government-organized mass killing of Tutsis at the end of which an estimated 5,000 were killed in the Gikongoro Prefecture alone (Segal 1964, 13–15).

Apart from the 1963–1964 violence, into the 1970s both Tutsis and Hutus lived for the most part in peace under the seemingly stable Kayibanda regime. However, a new type of violence was about to erupt in Rwanda, purges, and the purges would lead to violence. In January 1973, a campaign was begun to purge Tutsi students from secondary schools and institutions of higher education, which then spread into the public and private sectors. Because Tutsis had been part of the educated class before and since

[6] It has been estimated that from 1,000 to 7,000 Tutsi men took part in this event (Segal, 1964, 13).

independence, Rwanda had continued to rely heavily on them in bureaucratic positions, in white collar jobs, and as teachers. These purges and the violence that ensued because of them—some Hutus were attacked as well as Tutsis—led to large numbers of Tutsis leaving their homeland, many of whom would, along with their children, become the core of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) that would eventually invade Rwanda from Uganda and set off a civil war (Reyntjens 1985, 471 and 502–503; Segal 1964, 11).

The purges and the violence that followed them weakened Kayibanda's credibility, especially among members of the Rwandan military who staged a July 5, 1973, coup against him. The leader of the coup, Juvénal Habyarimana, became the second president of an independent Rwanda (Prosecutor 2003, 5).

The Second Rwandan Republic and the Path to Genocide

For the most part, the years under Juvénal Habyarimana's leadership were much better for both Tutsis and Hutus than had been the years of divisiveness under which they lived during the previous regime. However, during the 1990s, four events took place that altered Rwanda's political and social landscapes (Straus 2006, 24).

The first event occurred on October 1, 1990, when members of the RPF attacked Rwanda from southern Uganda, initiating a three-year civil war. The second event took place in 1991, during the civil war, when, under international pressure, President Habyarimana brought an end to the era of single-party rule in Rwanda, which had been highly favorable to Hutus. The third event also occurred during the civil war, in April 1992, and was a result of the second event, which was Habyarimana's having to form a coalition government with the political opposition. The fourth event, the August 1993 signing of the Arusha Accords, brought an end to the civil war with RPF forces, however,

the provisions of the treaty, which were negotiated by the coalition government, were believed, by Hutus, to be highly favorable to the Tutsis (Straus 2006, 24).

Though the first three events were inevitable, hard-line Hutus were at odds with them. Perhaps the worst blow to the Hutus was the enactment of the Arusha Accords, which required Hutus to give up a large portion of the country's military power (fifty percent of the military's officer corps and forty percent of other military personnel) to the opposition (Tutsis) and to form a broader based government that would be expected to hold multiparty elections. Adding to the foment created by the Arusha Accords was the fact that Rwanda lost some of its sovereignty when, during the time of transition, an international peacekeeping force was positioned within its boundaries to monitor the transitions (Straus 2006, 24).

Because Hutus had a long-term, ongoing distrust of all Tutsis—they tended to see members of the RPF and of Rwanda's Tutsi population within the country as being one and the same—they began taking measures against any possibility of future Tutsi dominance. Before the signing of the Arusha Accords and the end of the civil war, Hutu hardliners had coalesced into a movement under the banner of Hutu Power (also known as Hutu *Pawa*), which was basically a call for Hutu unity against one common enemy: Tutsis (Straus 2006, 25 and 29–31). Once that unity was achieved, the Hutu-led government took other steps: it created a civilian defense program and funded and began training a youth militia in 1993. Hutu hardliners also went so far as to create death lists (Ferroggiaro 2001, document #1; Gasana 2002, 214–215 and 243). In addition, Hutus who had belonged to the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (Mouvement républicain national pour la démocratie et le developpement

[MRND]), President Habyarimana's now-defunct political party (the only political party there had been during the single-party era), funded and distributed racist propaganda and founded and promoted a radio station, which through its broadcasts instilled fear and increased general hatred toward Tutsis (Hintjens 1999, 274; *Hotel Rwanda* 2005; Prosecutor 2003, 1–16).

Hatred and fear of Tutsis had been carefully nurtured and put into place by Hutu hardliners. All that was needed was an incident or series of incidents that could tip the country into a maelstrom of chaos and violence, and a volatile incident presented itself when the president was assassinated on April 6, 1994. Less than an hour after the president's death, Rwanda's armed forces and extremist paramilitary groups went into action, setting up barricades and roadblocks (Ferroggiaro 2001, 1). Equally fast was an extremely virulent, well-organized, three-month-long carnage of genocide by the end of which nearly ten percent of the general population would be murdered and approximately seventy-five percent of the Tutsi population would be exterminated (Verwimp 2004, 233).

1955.

Bearing Witness: The Story of Emil Gilles

Birth and Death in Rwanda: "That's How It Was"

Emil Gilles was born in Rwanda, in 1955. His mother died the day of his birth while being rushed in a cart to a hospital that was too many miles away.

"I was the eleventh child. I was never told her name," said Gilles of his mother. "I was raised by my grandparents."

Though they were his mother's parents, he never asked them her name. He felt that it would be disrespectful to his grandmother because he had gone through life feeling that she was his actual mother.

"My grandfather," said Gilles, "took me to school, and I attended until the end of primary school" [which was approximately the equivalent of the sixth grade in the United States public educational system]. "I went most of one year more."

"I didn't meet my father or my brothers and sisters until I was seventeen," said Gilles. "When I did, I asked my brothers my mother's name and they wouldn't tell me. They laughed. I don't know why."

Because of the circumstances surrounding his birth, Gilles didn't know his birthdate; all he knew was his year of birth. So, he "created" a birthday.

"I picked a day in mid-November," said Gilles. "That's when I celebrate my birthday."

About twenty years ago, shortly after his father's death, Gilles was given a book that had belonged to his father, which contained the names and birthdates of generations of his father's family. After looking through the lists in the book, he found his name and learned that he had actually been born in April of 1955.

Gilles has been married for close to thirty years. He and his wife have four children. In Rwanda, Gilles had a good job and he and his family lived on a prosperous farm on a hill overlooking the capital, Kigali. In Rwanda, Gilles was a Hutu; his wife was a Tutsi.

An Endemic Evil: Genocide

Day One: No Visible Changes

Emil Gilles was employed by an international religious organization that was headquartered in Washington, D.C. On Wednesday, April 6, 1994, the day genocide began in Rwanda, he was at work, about fourteen miles from his home, giving aid to refugees from Burundi. When he returned home from work that evening, he noticed some suspicious behavior.

"At around eight o'clock or nine o'clock I saw soldiers[1] behind my house. They were stopped there—there were about six or seven, in a truck," he explained. "I passed them and there was no trouble. I asked my wife and kids, 'What is going on tonight?'" His wife said, "I don't know."

Not long after returning home, his wife gave him dinner and then he went to bed. For the most part, other than the appearance of soldiers, he saw and heard nothing terribly out of the ordinary.

[1] The soldiers would have been part of the Rwandan military and not members of the *interahamwe* or any other paramilitary groups.

Day Two: The Spread of Fear

On the morning of the second day of the genocide, Gilles awoke at four a.m. to the sound of bombs exploding in the distance.

"It was soldiers firing on the Parliament building," he said. "There were six hundred soldiers in the building. Fifty-five percent of the soldiers [in the building] were Hutu and forty-five percent were Tutsi," which, he explained, was in fulfillment of the Arusha Accords. At this point, he had not yet heard about what had transpired the previous day.

"I opened the radio," said Gilles, who had wanted to find out what was going on, "and nothing. Five o'clock now the radio was open."

This was when he heard the announcement that the president was dead and that, for the sake of safety, no one should leave his or her home. This was also the first day that the fear spreading throughout the country, as a result of the ensuing genocide, began to affect Gilles's neighborhood.

"Everything changed," he said. "People were starting to hide, to run. My neighbor, a Tutsi—he gave me his clothes. 'Where are you going?' I asked. He never told me. He never said where he'd go, but he left his clothes in my home." Not long thereafter, his neighbor was killed.

"There was another neighbor. He'd been working at the hospital. If you were in a hospital, a guest in a home, you didn't move. After two days, he comes home. He tells me, 'There's trouble. People are killing each other.' He asked me, 'Can you come to my home?' He was young," said Gilles, a paternal note sounding in his voice. "He said,

'Please, come to my home. They will come and kill me.' So, now, I take in that guy and we're hiding him. After that, I took in more charges and now, my home is full of so many kids."

"I think it was a test," said Gilles, sounding reflective as he spoke about the last day of seeming calm before murder would be unleashed in his neighborhood. "I remember. All day. Nothing."

Day Three: Death Pays a Visit

"Friday, around nine o'clock, that's when started the trouble," said Gilles of the morning of the third day of genocide throughout Rwanda and its initial appearance in his neighborhood. "I saw *interahamwe*[2] coming in a car and some military."[3] According to Gilles, once out of their vehicle, the combined forces marched by houses, shouting, "You must kill Tutsis, all Tutsis. They're the ones who shot down the plane."

Most of the people stayed inside their homes, fearing to go outside, except for one innocent, unfortunate, caught unaware, who became the neighborhood's first genocide fatality.

"They killed a young boy," said Gilles gravely of the scene he and many neighbors witnessed. "He didn't run. He was a boy from my church. He hadn't done anything. He didn't know."

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[2] The *interahamwe* were militias that were headed typically by young men who had been militarily trained as part of the MRND's youth group. Often, at least in Emil Gilles's neighborhood, boys and adolescents took part in the violence. In many areas of the country the *interahamwe*'s influence led to the killing of Tutsis—they organized many of the attacks (Straus 2006, 26– 27).

[3] Gilles said that the soldiers who came to his neighborhood that morning had been part of the late president's most trusted forces. He added that they came from the part of the country where the president had been born and raised and from two surrounding districts. According to Gilles, since they were strangers in the area, they had no qualms about who they killed.

By the third day, killing wasn't the only problem.

"So, now, this is the third day, and my kitchen is starting to have a problem: No food. So, where to get food? People had been coming to my home. People were killing each other. And I saw someone come from my church, a Hutu, and I asked him, 'How are you, my friend?' 'Fine,'" he said.

His neighbor, as a member of Gilles's church and a Hutu, was nevertheless an outsider. Though he had lived in the area for a while he had come from the same area as the late president and, according to Gilles, the man had come to this area only to make money.

"So, I think, something is wrong. I can see," said Gilles, convinced that the man had come to kill him, possibly along with the other people who were beginning to gather around his house.

"You know," the man told Gilles, "my chickens have no food and they died. How many chickens you have?'"

"Take five," Gilles told him. "He took five," recounted Gilles, with a chuckle, which was a small number of the two hundred chickens the Gilles family possessed. "Two hundred chickens are a lot to finish," interjected Gilles, laughing.

After the man left, the *interahamwe* appeared.

"Now I think *they* have come to kill me. The *interahamwe* leader asked, 'Will you give me a chicken?' 'Yes! Take it if you want." The *interahamwe* left but the Gilles family was not yet safe; the *interahamwe* returned.

The group leader approached Gilles and said, "I came here because I heard there is a man who gives chickens to save peoples' lives." "No!" responded Gilles. "For three

days there is no food. The stores are not open. Which is best, to give chickens to people or to let chickens die?" The man responded, "You're right!" "Can you imagine?" said Gilles, breaking into incredulous laughter.

"So," concluded Gilles, "he took chickens, too."

Day Four: "Kill! Kill! Kill!"

"The *interahamwe* came to my home," said Gilles of their return. "I knew them. They said, 'Come, give me your truck.' I was suddenly afraid. I was thinking to myself. 'Who's driving the truck?' My heart told me, don't argue. 'Ok,' I said, 'take it.'"

Not wanting to be pressed into taking part in whatever was about to happen, Gilles gave the *interahamwe* his truck, but he did not give the killers the papers for the vehicle or the spare tire.

Gilles and his family were now sheltering more than forty Tutsis, most of them children. There were several places on the farm in which to hide: the main house, where Gilles and his family lived; a chicken coop; his younger brother's house; and an outdoor kitchen.

Later, the *interahamwe* returned. Gilles said the group consisted of six men with guns and a group of children.

"Everybody, out!" the leader told Gilles, his family, and the Tutsis they were sheltering. Everyone left the house, as ordered, and then the group was forced to form a line outside. "The one who said 'everybody out "was checking under beds, sheets, everywhere for Tutsis," Gilles recalled.

According to Gilles, a neighbor had been hiding in the bushes. The man often argued with the *interahamwe*. Before going into hiding, he left his two daughters and son with the Gilles family. The *interahamwe* leader pulled the siblings from the line and said, "I must find the father for these children, I must find the mother. They must die."

Not receiving any response, he set the group of children who came with him onto the three siblings. The group of children hacked and then killed the other three children with garden hoes. After the conclusion of the odious deed, the *interahamwe* leader yelled to everyone: "Go to bed now!"

A Day at a Time: The Genocide Continues

One evening Gilles came home from work and encountered his wife in a state of near hysteria.

"I went home," said Gilles, who had been out with his workers. "My wife was crying. She said, 'Do you know what happened? They came to kill you. But they couldn't find you.' She said, 'They're going to come again to kill you, for sure.' Everyone at the house heard this. But, by this time, there were no longer forty people at the house. After the killing of the children, many of the people had run away."

Gilles left his home and went in search of what he thought would be—at least in most countries—a safe haven.

"I went into hiding in a church. It's a big church," said Gilles. "So, now, if the *interahamwe* came into the church office to steal things they will know they must kill me to rob the church."

Luckily, they did not come while Gilles was there. Once again, he had evaded death.

Are There Any Survivors? Gilles Returns to Work

About two weeks after Gilles's disappearance, the family received an amicable visitor.

"My boss," said Gilles, "an American, never left. So, he sent someone to see if I was still alive. This person found me and asked if I could go back to work. I said, 'Yes, why not?' He gave me food, water, wood, and medicine to deliver—day and night, day and night." Instead of delivering supplies to Burundian refugees, Gilles was now delivering supplies to orphanages, injured Rwandans, and Rwandans in hiding.

Shortly thereafter, his employer took Gilles's wife and children to the Hôtel Des Mille Collines, known to moviegoers as *The Hotel Rwanda* (*Hotel Rwanda* 2005). Once there, people were more or less safe from the rampant chaos that raged beyond the hotel walls.

"I can't go to work if my wife died," Gilles explained. "A lot of children were put in the orphanage. My sister and her husband's sister and others put their children in the orphanage. So, now my wife and children are safe, and I am safe because my boss took me to live in his home."

Elegy: Remembering Those Who Died During the Genocide

"And that war," said Gilles, recounting the horror of the genocide, "no one knew that it would last for 100 days. Every day everyone was thinking, 'tomorrow it will stop, tomorrow it will stop, tomorrow it will stop.'"

Many close to him died.

"There was my neighbor," said Gilles. "He gave me his goats. When someone gives you his goats, he is your friend. He and everyone was killed in the house. They threw a bomb into it and everyone was killed. They were all Tutsis. There were two old

women—one was seventy-five, the other was sixty-five. Imagine how they died—by fire. Not by gun, not by knife."

One loss was especially close to Gilles's heart.

"I had a brother who was born after me (to his father's last wife). He died because of his ID card" [the national ID card Rwandans carried]. He was a Hutu. I couldn't do anything. A lot of people died because of their ID cards."[4]

"There were many! There was this, this, and this—many!" said Gilles. "Terrible! Terrible! I lose many, many friends, and you can't do anything—nothing! The people who were killing each other, knew each other. It means you know who killed."

Epilogue: After the Genocide

After the end of the genocide and the collapse of the Hutu-power government, the Tutsis once again became a major influence in Rwanda's power structure. During this time, jobs were scarce. Nevertheless, Gilles was offered a government job as project manager, which was similar to the position he had held with the religious organization. However, after a couple years in this position, he felt once again that his life was in danger.

"I was a Hutu," said Gilles, "and many Tutsis thought I shouldn't have this job. My boss would tell Tutsis, 'He is a good Hutu. He didn't kill your fathers, your brothers, or your children.' I knew I wasn't safe."

[4] According to Gilles, there was a fairly even mix of Hutus and Tutsis where he lived, and before the genocide people had lived in peace. Therefore, Hutus coming from his part of the country were perceived as being sympathetic to Tutsis. The country's ID card played a large factor in life and death because Gilles said that it told when you were born, where you came from, and whether you were Hutu or Tutsi. In the case of Gilles' younger brother, where he came from, as listed on his ID card, proved to be his death sentence.

In 1996, Gilles went to live in another country, which, he believed was far enough away from Rwanda for him to live in safety. For five years he survived as best he could while studying auto mechanics. After three years in exile, he was able to send for his family (his youngest child was born outside of Rwanda). Things, however, were uncertain in the other country and before long Gilles found himself in a precarious situation.

"After five years they told me," he said of the other country's government, "'You came here to go to school. You are finished, so you can go home now.'"

Certain that he would not have long to live if he returned to Rwanda, Gilles applied for refugee status for himself and his family in the country he had made his home for the last five years and received it. The family remained there for five more years, as refugees, but conditions were not good.

In 2007, Gilles and his family received refugee status, once again, this time to come to the United States. It was granted and that year they came to live in the United States.

The Culmination of Centuries of Repression and Subjugation in El Salvador: Civil War

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries for them from prayers or bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs—
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

"Anthem for Doomed Youth," by Wilfred Owen (Lewis 1963, 44)

Prelude: A Brief Explanation of the Factors that Led to Civil War

It should have come as no surprise to the international community when, during the 1980s, the tiny Central American republic of El Salvador erupted into a bloody civil war. The social problems that were the foundation for civil war had been in place since colonial times and had not been resolved after independence from Spain; during a century and a half of corrupt, mostly military dictatorships; or, at the advent of the 1980s, by a well-intentioned but inept civilian-military junta that came to power too late and, when it did, offered too little.

At the base of the country's social and economic woes was an inequitable social hierarchy that was determined along racial lines. At the top of the hierarchy were those who gained their foothold of power during the years of colonization, which consisted mainly of Europeans and their descendants. In the middle were "Ladinos," who claimed

to be most anything but indigenous. At the bottom of the social order was the vast majority of Salvadorans who were of mostly indigenous ancestry (Baker-Cristalis 2004, 18–19; Lauria-Santiago 1999, 498–499). This social order was the main determinant of the haves and have nots within El Salvador's agrarian economy.

Inequitable Conditions: A Brief History of El Salvador

In colonial El Salvador, the first wealth-producing industry was cacao (cocoa), and planters relied almost exclusively on the indigenous people to cultivate it. Though it was more or less compulsory that the indigenous people do the work (the cocoa crop was a tribute payment by the indigenous people to the Spanish colonizers), the planters and the government allowed the indigenous people to control the communal landholdings on which they lived and cultivated the crop. However, by the end of the sixteenth century, the indigenous population had decreased, which had a diminishing effect on cocoa production. Because the smaller workforce led to less production, cocoa was phased out as the major crop in favor of a more lucrative crop, indigo (Browning 1971, 52–67).

The production of indigo was more complex and, therefore, more widely encompassing than that of cocoa because it required two processes: cultivation and processing. Growing crops for indigo was also time-consuming because it relied on "shifting cultivation" techniques.[1] Due to indigo production's dual nature, planters required large tracts of land on which to carry out both operations. In their quest for more land, planters took control of indigenous communal lands, divided them into large estates (*haciendas de tinta* or *haciendas de añil* [color plantations]), and populated the estates

[1] Indigo plant cultivation required several steps and it took years to bring a cropped site to maturity (Browning 1971, 66–77).

with permanent workforces[2] and outside workers who were hired during the time of harvest and processing.[3] As a result of the planters' land-grabbing practices, by the turn of the nineteenth century, El Salvador's wholly indigenous communities and their way of life were both beginning to disappear (Browning 1971, 66–77).

In the mid-nineteenth century, by which time El Salvador had become a sovereign republic, there was a decline in the international demand for indigo, so Salvadoran planters began to experiment with another crop: coffee. The coffee growers needed the land most conducive to growing their crop, and the most desirable land for coffee cultivation was found in the country's central highlands, which were inhabited by some of the last indigenous collective communities. To secure this land for the planters, who were comprised by a number of wealthy families that would become known as "the fourteen families" (*Los Catorce*), the Salvadoran government passed a series of laws that created an economic stranglehold on the vast majority of Salvadorans (Browning 1971, 155–173; McColm 1982, 11; Menjívar 2005, 65, 79, and 82).

The first of the measures, privatization, which was legislated during 1881 (abolition of common grounds [i.e., communal lands]) and extended into 1882, forced the indigenous people off of their remaining communal lands so that the lands could be made available for sale to the wealthy planters. This act of privatization, however, left the indigenous people—the majority of Salvadorans—homeless. A second set of measures, vagrancy laws, which coincided with privatization, made unemployment a punishable

[2] Through a system known as *repartimiento*, planters were allowed to "draft" up to four percent of the male indigenous population in a given village to work their crops at a set wage (Browning 1971, 72–73).

[3] Sharecroppers (*colonos*) also worked small plots on the estate (Browning 1971, 71).

offense. Because the indigenous people no longer had their own lands, their main recourse for survival was to work for the large landowners. In effect, the vagrancy laws created a compulsory workforce—a type of serfdom—whose only recourse was to work for the planters or to be treated as criminals (Browning 1971, 203–221; Menjívar 2005, 65, 79, 82, and 119–120).

In 1889, more legislation followed that further damaged the indigenous peoples' already perilous economic situation. The government passed laws that established a rural police force that roamed the countryside, first in the coffee-growing regions, then later throughout the country, in search of people who "appeared" to be unemployed and, thus, vagrant. Those arrested for vagrancy, real or presumed, were jailed and, as part of their punishment, compelled to work for a landowner without compensation. After a said-to-be vagrant was "set free," he or she would be expected to return to work on a plantation at the usual wages (Menjívar 2005, 119–120).

For years, by way of a coalition among corrupt dictators, wealthy landowners, and the military, the Salvadoran government had suppressed and enslaved its mostly indigenous population. However, throughout the 1920s and into the early 1930s the political landscape began to change, due in great part to the effect of the Great Depression on El Salvador's economy, the rise of labor unions, the emergence of the Partido Comunista Salvadoreño (Salvadoran Communist Party [PSC]), and the fact that in 1931, El Salvador had an unrigged presidential election in which the peoples' choice, Arturo Araujo, was elected to the presidency (Duarte 1986, 28–32).

> Just as the Depression swept over the world, a rare opportunity arose in El Salvador: a presidential election without a prearranged winner. The incumbent representative of the oligarchy, angry because none of his political heirs showed

> the proper deference to his wishes, capriciously opted for clean elections. Of the five aristocrats who ran, only one, Araujo, was sensitive to the needs of his countrymen. … For the first time, the issue of land reform in El Salvador was raised, reflecting the influence of the Mexican Revolution, which was then in its final stages. (Duarte 1986, 31)

Unfortunately, the hope for change that came with Arturo Araujo's election was soon dashed. In December 1931, after only months in office, President Araujo was deposed by a military coup and replaced by General Maximiliano Hernandez Martínez. In response to the coup and to a series of fraudulent local elections that were held the following month, the PSC, under the leadership of Augustín Farabundo Martí, called for revolution (Kinkaid 1987, 476).

Beginning January 22, 1932, there was a series of peasant insurrections. In reaction to the insurrections, over a period of weeks an estimated 15,000 to 30,000 Salvadorans—the vast majority of them indigenous—were murdered by the Salvadoran military. Known among Salvadorans as *La Matanza* (*The* Massacre), the government claimed that this act of mass murder was launched in reaction to Martí's peasant revolt, and that *La Matanza* was part of a government campaign to seek out and kill PSC organizers. The worst case of state-sponsored violence at that point in Latin American history (Ching and Tilley 1998, 154; Duarte 1986, 33–34), *La Matanza* only served to create greater distrust within the indigenous community of both the Salvadoran government and the Salvadoran military.

Circumstances and Players Coalesce into Civil War

Following World War II, poverty and its accompanying problems were rife in El Salvador, especially in the countryside. By the 1970s, the poorest fifty percent of

Salvadorans suffered from malnutrition,[4] which resulted in the birth of underweight, undernourished infants. There were also widespread vitamin deficiencies, riboflavin deficiencies, and cases of anemia. Beyond the epidemic of malnutrition were other disease-inducing problems such as dependence on polluted water sources and lack of sewage facilities, which led to a rise in cases of chronic illness and higher mortality rates.[5,6] Adding to the misery of the physical body were the squalid conditions in which Salvadorans sometimes lived, due in some areas of the country to the expansion of the planters' large, private estates.[7] Aggravating the already rampant health and living conditions was the fact that both medical help and hospital care were hard to find. According to a 1971 census, there were only three doctors and seventeen hospital beds per every 10,000 Salvadorans (Library of Congress 1988).

The worsening economic and physical conditions led Salvadorans to turn to two liberating influences: the Roman Catholic Church (the Church) and Radio Venceremos (Victory Radio). The first influence, the Church, raised the peoples' sense of class-consciousness through its liberation theology teachings. To this end, Roman Catholic

[4] Children were most affected: more than forty percent of them under age five suffered from cases of mild malnutrition and nearly twenty-three percent of starving children required medical attention (Library of Congress 1988).

[5] Once again, it was children who suffered most with an approximate 125 of them dying per 1,000 live births (Library of Congress 1988).

[6] Approximately thirty percent of total annual Salvadoran deaths occurred among toddlers under one year of age, while fourteen percent of deaths were attributed to children between one and four years of age (Library of Congress 1988).

[7] Some of the most unfortunate Salvadorans lived in tiny structures on narrow strips of land that bordered public thoroughfares and rivers. Others lived in shacks they built on thin parcels of land that were hedged in by fences of an estate and a public road, which were known as "fence housing" (Library of Congress 1988).

priests and lay leaders organized "Christian base" communities in which Salvadorans were encouraged to reflect on their inequitable treatment. This religious discourse, in turn, led to a radical ideology that evolved as a reaction to the extreme military repression under which Salvadorans had so long toiled (Baker-Cristalis 2004, 20–21; Danner 1994, 19 and 30). The second influence, Radio Venceremos, which began as an alternative to government radio and censorship, became the voice of revolution and guerilla warfare. It served as an inspiration to the people. Radio Venceremos, which was a source of hope to the people, was feared by the government and despised by the military. Its broadcasts poked fun at government and military blunders and sometimes included satirical scripts that made top military leaders, prominent citizens, and, occasionally, the U.S ambassador, the recipients of their jokes. Its potency was such that broadcasts had to take place in undisclosed locations and, sometimes, on the run from the Salvadoran military (Danner 1994, 22 and 33; *Voces Innocentes* 2004). By the late 1970s, the Salvadoran people were ready to take their country out of the hands of the incompetent government, the corrupt military, and "the fourteen families," and place it into their own.

On October 15, 1979, the Salvadoran government began to implode when a military coup removed President General Umberto Romero from office. After the coup, a well-intentioned attempt at rule by a civilian-military junta; bad choices by the military that further damaged relations among the citizenry; and the organizing and fighting power of the guerillas, created a seesaw effect in the country's disintegrating power structure (McColm 1982, 15–16 and 23–24).

Because the military-civilian junta—the first in the country's history—was unable to keep the promises it made, shortly after its creation, a number of its members, sensing defeat, chose to resign. Concurrent with the attempt to build a legitimate, military-civilian-led government was the coalescence of several radical, guerilla-type organizations that became the Salvadoran government's and the Salvadoran military's greatest foe, the Marxist, guerilla-led Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front [FMLN]) (Baker-Cristales 2004, 21; Duarte 1986, 104–110; McColm 1982, 47).

In January 1980, after just a few months in power and already in its third round of resignations, the junta was displaying signs of imminent collapse (Duarte 1986, 104–110). In an attempt to stave off collapse and add legitimacy to the junta, in March 1980, popular Partido Demócrata Cristiano (Christian Democratic Party) leader José Napoleón Duarte, who had returned from exile in Venezuela shortly after the October 1979 overthrow of President Romero, began to take a role in government affairs, serving as the moderating force within the junta (McColm 1982, 47).

During this period, the new government announced Phase I of a promised land reform in which estates of 1,235 acres or more would be turned into peasant cooperatives, which, if carried out, would be the beginning of the end of "the fourteen families'" domination of the country and its wealth. However, undermining the government's attempts at stability and credibility, and a major blow to the Salvadoran people, was the March 1980 assassination of Archbishop Oscar A. Romero, in San Salvador, while he

was saying Mass (McColm 1982, 47).[8] This act of murder turned Romero, who was already a folk hero, into a martyr, and strengthened the guerilla forces' moral authority against that of the government's (U.S. Institute of Peace 1993, 21).

In December 1980, in an effort to stabilize the country, José Napoleón Duarte was named president, making him the first civilian president in nearly 50 years. This move, however, was blighted when during that same month El Salvador became a region of international concern as a result of the murders of three American Roman Catholic sisters and a lay worker (McColm 1982, 18 and 47), which further weakened the fragile government's image and authority.

As the 1980s progressed, the political unrest and fighting between government and communist forces continued to escalate until what little rule of law had existed disappeared. The military, which was obsessed with its search for communists and for those it believed were allied with the communist guerillas, undermined the government by acting on its own (Danner 1994, 25–28). Out of this paranoid mindset came the terrifying death squads that were associated with a person's sudden disappearance (*desparecido)*, which, more often than not, resulted in the death of "the disappeared" (Didion 1983, 14).

> There was the Cherokee Chief seen following the Dutch television crew killed in Chalatenango province in March of 1982. There was the red Toyota three-quarter-ton pickup sighted near the van driven by the four American Catholic workers on the night they were killed in 1980. There were, in the late spring and summer of 1982, the three Toyota panel trucks, one yellow, one blue, and one green, none bearing plates, reported present at each of the mass detentions (a "detention" is

[8] Bishop Romero gave his last homily the day before his death (March 23). That day he called on Salvadoran soldiers to defy their superiors if ordered to kill, stating, "No soldier is obliged to obey an order against the law of God" (Duarte 1986, 117).

> another fixed feature of local life, and often precedes a "disappearance") in the Amatepec district of San Salvador. (Didion 1983, 14)

The death squads were part of the Salvadoran military's "dirty war," the brainchild of conservative members of the military (Danner 1994, 25–28), which was intended to scare Salvadorans away from an alliance with the communist forces.

> The most visible signs of the "dirty war" were mutilated corpses that each morning littered the streets of El Salvador's cities. Sometimes the bodies were headless, or faceless, their features having been obliterated with a shotgun blast or an application of battery acid; sometimes limbs were missing, or hands or feet chopped off, or eyes gouged out; women's genitals were torn and bloody, bespeaking repeated rape; men's were often found severed and stuffed into their mouths. And cut into the flesh of a corpse's back or chest was likely to be the signature of one or another of the "death squads" that had done the work, the most notorious of which were the Union of White Warriors and the Maximiliano Hernández Martínez Brigade. (Danner 1994, 25–26)

Apparently, the Salvadoran military had found its "dirty war" to be ineffective: it hadn't inspired enough fear to keep Salvadorans from colluding with guerilla forces. So, the military devised a sordid plan, which it called *La Limpieza* (The Cleansing). Under *La Limpieza*, areas of the country believed to be "infected" by communism would be "scrubbed clean" (Danner 1994, 52).

The most infamous "cleansing" took place Wednesday, December 9, 1981, in the village of El Mozote, in the Morazán province. In preparation for *La Limpieza*, Salvadorans from throughout the province, which was within the main theater of fighting between government and guerilla forces, were encouraged to go to El Mozote, where they were led to believe that they would be safe from the surrounding warfare. They had no idea of the fate that awaited them. (Danner 1994, 11–20, 32–34, 52, and 152).

> The strafing ceased not long before the men of the Atlacatl entered the hamlet, dragging with them civilians they had found hiding along the way. Tired and impatient, the soldiers swarmed about the houses of El Mozote and pounded on

the doors with the butts of their M-16s. "Salgan!" they shouted angrily. "Get out here! Get out here now!"

Hesitantly, the people came out of the twilight, frightened, bewildered, unsure of what was happening. The soldiers, cursing and yelling, pulled them forward, hustled them along with the butts of their rifles, herded everyone into the center of the street. Rufina and her husband, Domingo Claros, emerged with their four children: he was carrying three-year-old Marta Lilián and leading Cristino, nine years old, while Rufina had five-year-old María Dolores by the hand and carried at her breast María Isabel, eight months old. "They told us all to lie down in the street, *boca abajo*"—literally, "mouth down"—and they began pushing some of us down," Rufina says. "As my husband was setting the little girl down, a soldier pushed him to the ground. The girl started to cry. By then, all the children were crying."

The entire town lay like that, perhaps four hundred people face down in the dirt, as darkness fell. Between the wailing of at least a hundred children and the shouting of the soldiers—hundreds had entered the hamlet by now—the din must have been unbearable. The soldiers marched up and down the lines of people, kicking one here and there, striking another with a rifle butt, and all the while keeping up a steady rain of shouted insults and demands. As Rufina tells it, a soldier would stop next to a man or a woman, kick the prone body, and bark out a question: Who were the guerillas? Where were they? Where did they hide their guns? The men and women of El Mozote insisted that there were no guerillas there, that they knew nothing of guerrillas or weapons. "If you want to find guerillas," one woman shouted tearfully, raising her head from the ground, "go out there"—she waved toward the hills—"outside town. But here, here we're not guerillas."

This only made the soldiers angrier. "All you sons of bitches are collaborators," an officer said. "You're going to have to pay for those bastards." (Danner 1994, 62–63)

At the conclusion of the carnage—rapes, shootings, beheadings, hangings of children, impalement of infants—approximately 500 to 800 people had "paid for those bastards" with their own lives (Danner 1994, 62–84 and 279–304).[9]

[9] It is unlikely that the true number of fatalities will ever be accurately known. Danner offers figures compiled by *New York Times* writer Raymond Bonner (733); figures from a list drawn up by the Human Rights Office of the Archbishopric of El Salvador (767); and an estimate by the Truth Commission (more than 500) (Danner 1994, 279–304).

In January 2012, I visited El Mozote. I saw the memorial to those killed during this hideous event. I also saw a couple bullet-pocked buildings—I walked through one of them— that still stand as proof of this unbelievably inhumane event. I was told by my guide that victims' remains are still being found at the massacre site.

Rufina Amaya Márquez survived the *La Limpieza* to tell what happened that day in El Mozote, but her story was denied by the Salvadoran government. It was also denied by the U.S. government, which, headed by President Ronald Reagan, who was as rabidly anti-communist as the Salvadoran military, had its own interests at stake. The conflict in El Salvador, however, was not a popular issue with the U.S. Congress so to continue sending military advisers, funneling money to the Salvadoran government, and shipping weapons to the Salvadoran military, as the U.S. government had been doing, the Reagan administration had to prove that El Salvador had improved its human rights efforts—thus, the El Mozote cover up. As a result of the cover up, what really happened at El Mozote remained unclear until after the civil war ended in 1992 (Danner 1994, 9–10 and 89–91).

As the war escalated throughout the 1980s, consuming an increasing number of victims, there were fewer men available to fight for either the Salvadoran military or for the guerillas. To remedy the shortage, the Salvadoran military began to recruit boys of all ages, taking them from schools, raiding countryside villages in pursuit of them, abducting them into the military with or without their consent. The guerillas, too, recruited boys and also women; many of the recruits, however, joined of their own accord because they saw the guerilla forces as being heroic and on the side of the people (Danner 1994, 39; Marcos 2008; and *Voces Innocentes* 2004).

Contrary to what the Salvadoran military wanted and to the wishes of the FMLN guerilla forces, the wasteful consumption of lives would lead to immigration for many Salvadorans who didn't want to serve as useless fodder for either ideology or what, during the last few years of the conflict, was seen as a lost cause. Some left their

homeland of their own accord; others were sent away by relatives (Marcos 2008). By 1992, when the peace agreement that ended the civil war was signed, approximately 75,000[10] people had died (MacMichael 2007, 420) and a multitude of Salvadorans had fled to other countries.

[10] As with the death count at El Mozote, it is unlikely that anyone will ever know the actual death toll that resulted from the twelve-year civil war. Most sources set it at anywhere from 70,000 to 75,000 people.

A Personal Perspective: The Story of Francisco Marcos

Surviving Guerilla Warfare: A Child's Story

The 1980s was a terrifying decade in which to live in El Salvador. Rampant, senseless violence; sinister death squads on the prowl; people suddenly "disappeared" and never heard from again; abductions of young boys into the Salvadoran military; and defections by men, women, and boys into the guerilla forces were common occurrences. Francisco Marcos, who was a boy at the time, described a day that began normally enough before it evolved into an episode of fear and uncertainty that was sadly in keeping with the time.

Early one morning, Marcos's mother, Doña Lolita, boarded a bus to the country's capital, San Salvador, with her oldest daughter, María, and her daughter's four-year-old son, Luisito. Because Luisito was extremely ill, it had been decided to take him to the children's hospital, which was approximately a two-and-one-half-hour drive north from where the family lived, in San Miguel. Generally, San Salvador was an easy day trip, if a traveler left early enough in the morning. When, however, his mother, sister, and nephew did not return that day, Marcos began to fear the worst.

"I was mainly worried about my mother and sister. They didn't come back from San Salvador when they should have. I didn't know what had happened to them. They left at six in the morning so that they could be sure of getting into the hospital and returning to San Miguel the same day."

Though stressful, according to Marcos, travel to the capital wasn't usually dangerous—even during the civil war.

"Most of the trouble," he explained, referring to the fighting between military and guerilla forces, "was in the north, around the capital, especially in Santa Ana. The guerillas usually didn't come where we were, in the south."

Nevertheless, the day his mother, sister, and nephew set out for San Salvador turned out to be a dangerous one. That very day the guerillas began a surprise offensive movement against the Salvadoran military that expanded the theater of war south to San Miguel.

"They came to my hometown because there were, I believe, two military bases," said Marcos. "Their purpose, we believed, was to take one of the military bases."

Marcos, left in charge of two younger children, his brother Jose and his eighteen-month-old nephew, Carlito, by his other sister, Luisa, had to make adult decisions and maintain an adult's composure while a battle between guerillas and government forces was fought outside the front door.

"We were in the house—I knew no one could get into it," or so he reasoned at the time, as a child might reason. "But I was afraid of bullets coming through the window. Jose is four years younger than me, so I guess he was eight. I remember at one point he went to look out a window and I told him, 'Don't look out the window, you might get shot!'"

According to Marcos, other than the occasional ratta-tat-tat of machine gun fire, the environment was relatively quiet. Marcos kept abreast of the situation by listening to radio broadcasts.

"It was quiet," he maintained, "and then we would hear guns. So we stayed inside. We found out later that someone had a bomb dropped on their house about five or

six houses away. Luckily, no one was home. We slept under the bed," he continued, before moving on to other reflections. "I thought it was probably the safest place to be—we wouldn't get hit by any bullets."

Perhaps it was because of the tension caused by the ensuing stillness and lack of panicked sounds or confusion outside of the house—sounds people usually associate with violent military encounters—that Marcos cannot remember how long the fighting persisted. When asked about his mother's return, he replied, "To be honest, I don't remember. The next day, I think."

Though his memory is not exact regarding the time of his mother's return, he does have a clear memory of what she said she had endured to get back to her sons and other grandson: "When she heard about the trouble in San Miguel, she left Maria and Luisito in San Salvador, with relatives, and found her way back home. She was able to go only so far—there was fighting going on between San Salvador and San Miguel."

Because of the fierce military conflict taking place between the capital and San Miguel, Marcos said, buses had stopped running between the two cities. His mother had to find alternative ways of travel, any kind of travel that would put her closer to the three boys.

"With no buses," he explained, "she got rides where she could. At one point, one of the cars she was in was pulled over." Unsure whether the interrogators who stopped the car were members of the Salvadoran military or guerilla fighters, she fled for safety.

"She managed to get away," he said. "There was one time, she told me, where she had to crawl some of the way, because there was shooting going on. She was afraid for us, worried, desperate to get back to us."

After his mother's safe return and two or three days of unabated military conflict, the situation in San Miguel had become more tenuous, so much so that Marcos and his mother feared for the lives of everyone in the house.

"Over the radio they said that it wasn't safe and we should leave," said Marcos. "So, a couple days after my mom returned, we took a bus to El Gavilan, up near Honduras, where my aunt and uncle lived. There were buses coming every hour. When we walked out of the house to the bus, we carried little white flags with us—we hoped the fighters would know we weren't part of the fighting. I carried Carlito on my shoulders," he added. "We had him holding a white flag, too. No one was sure what would happen—if we'd be safe outside of our houses."

"It must have been 1986. I was twelve years old. I was a little kid, taking care of two other little kids," he explained, in a tone that was almost apologetic in inflection. "I didn't know what to do. I was scared."

Rites of Passage

"I didn't want to leave," said Marcos, speaking of his hasty departure from his homeland, El Salvador, at age sixteen. "I was in school, I had friends, I had a family—I had a life. I had never really considered or thought about living anywhere else."

Marcos left his country just two years before the conclusion of a civil war that turned out to be nothing more than a blood bath, which, ultimately, no one won. Even though both sides—the Salvadoran military and the guerillas—knew that the war was a lost cause, both continued to impress, kidnap, intimidate, and threaten their fellow countrymen, intent on gathering the few men they could still find and the young boys they could round up to fight for them.

"The military was going to schools and taking children away to fight in the military," Marcos explained. "This happened mainly in the rural areas. Where I lived, in an urban area, it was different. Instead of going into the schools, groups of men would wait outside and drag you into their cars, and then they would take you away for military training. Usually, they were civilians who were recruited by the military to do this. I think the military paid them to do this."

According to Marcos, who is now in his thirties, he was fortunate enough to evade three abduction attempts.

"I don't have any proof and I don't know for sure," he said, remembering back to the first abduction attempt, "but I think it was the guerillas that were doing this. I don't remember much about it other than that they let me go. I guess I looked too young for them, I don't know. I guess it wasn't my time or it was my lucky day."

The second time there was an attempted abduction he wasn't alone. He had someone to think fast for him, to protect him—his mother.

"We were coming home after visiting relatives in the countryside," said Marcos, recapturing the moment. "We were on a bus, and they were actually pulling all of the people out of the bus, looking for men. This time it was the Salvadoran military. My mom was sitting next to me and she pulled me over her and threw a towel over me. They had asked why I wasn't coming out. 'He's sick,' my mother told them. 'I'm taking him to the hospital.' They looked at her like they didn't want to believe her, but how were they going to prove that she was lying?"

According to Marcos, in these types of abductions, whoever was looking for prospective soldiers—the military or the guerillas—would stop the buses, instruct everyone to get off the bus, keep the men and boys who got off of it, have the women re-board the vehicle, and then allow the drivers to continue on their route. The abductors would then take their latest "recruits" with them to military bases and other training areas.

The third attempted abduction led to the decision to leave. It wasn't the sixteen-year-old boy, however, who made the decision.

"One day while leaving school, I was grabbed and dragged to someone's car," said Marcos, describing the entrapment that awaited him and his classmates outside of the school doors. "A friend of mine, and a whole lot of other kids got away. Only six or eight of us fell into the trap. So my friend ran about ten blocks to where my house was to tell my mom that they were going to take me. My mom ran as fast as she could to get to where we were, and got into the car I was in. She told the guys in the car that she wasn't

going to let them take me. And one of them said, 'Well, lady, you have to let us do it. He has to go and he has to become a man.' And my mom said, 'Well, no. If you're going to take him you'll have to take me.' The man then said, 'What are you going to do, are you going to go fight the war?' My mom told them, 'I could. I could cook for you guys, clean your boots, anything, but you're not going to take my son. If you take him,' she told them, 'you're going to have to take me with you.' Then the man turned to the other guys in the car and said, 'You know, we're not going to deal with this crazy lady.' Then he told my mom, 'if you want to take your son, fine. Just keep in mind that one of these days we're going to get him and you won't be there, and you won't be able to get him out.'"

Soon after, Marcos's mother made a decision for him that he was too young to make for himself: He must leave.

"[The Salvadoran military] had already taken my cousin, and he was already serving," said Marcos. "The way they did it was they would keep you for three months. You couldn't see your family for three months because you were in training. After those three months, they'd let you go for a week to go visit your family. We were waiting for that week for my cousin to return. That was when my mother was going to send us away. She didn't want us to be statistics in a lost cause. She sent us both at the same time."

The trip out of the country was long, arduous, and lonely.

"We took a bus to San Salvador and from there another one to some place in Guatemala—I don't remember where. After that we found our way to the United States. The last time I saw my mom was in Guatemala. She left us in a hotel with a coyote who was going to help us. I don't remember what we even said to each other, I was all shook up. I was crying and she was crying. It was sad to have to leave my country like that,

especially at such a young age," he explained. "You don't want to really leave your country. You don't know what's out there. You don't know where you're going. You don't know what you will encounter."

Francisco Marcos didn't see his mother for ten years.

Hong Kong: Between East and West

> ...The beauty [of Hong Kong] is the beauty, like it or not, of the capitalist system. More than a usual share of this city's energies goes towards the making of money, and nobody has ever pretended otherwise... It was the prospect of wealth, more than the exertion of pride or power, that brought the British here in the first place, in a classic reversal of the dictum that trade follows the flag. (Morris 1989, 34)

In the Beginning: Hong Kong Prior to British Rule

For centuries, the island of Hong Kong had been of little value to its Chinese overseers. A craggy landmass void of agricultural use, separated by a mere mile of water from the southern coast of mainland China, the port city's chief function to the isolationist Chinese had been that of a point of contact with the rest of the world. However, Hong Kong began to grow in importance when European and American merchants settled there during the 1830s and, through their business acumen, brought prosperity to the city (Morris 1989, 8, 12, and 16).

Among foreign investors, the British were most interested in the island city. In the process of developing the greatest empire since the Romans, they wanted to establish a permanent trading center within China, but one that would exist under British sovereignty (Morris 1989, 8, 12, and 16). They soon had that opportunity.

During the nineteenth century, opium was one of the most expensive, highly sought-after international commodities, and the British held a virtual monopoly on it. Grown, harvested, and marketed in its Indian colony, the income derived from its sale increased Great Britain's economic power and imperial reach, particularly in China. Despite the fact that the sale of opium was prohibited in China, in open defiance of the Celestial Kingdom, British merchants sold opium to Chinese who could afford to pay the

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outrageous prices they demanded. By the late 1830s, and largely through the opium trade, British merchants had established a strong economic foothold in Hong Kong, so the British government appointed a Chief Superintendent of Trade for the area (Morris 1989, 13).

In 1839, the British opium trade in China suffered a temporary setback when a Chinese emissary, on the orders of His Imperial Majesty's government, refused to allow any more imports of opium into China. In accord with the Chinese government, the British Chief Superintendent of Trade, Captain Charles Elliot, of the Royal Navy, forced British merchants to turn over their supplies of opium, which were then destroyed in public. Outraged by these actions, the British merchants left the island and returned to their ships. The Chinese emissary further inflamed the situation by decreeing that the Chinese people were not to offer any form of libation to the opium merchants (Morris 1989, 14–15).

Shortly thereafter, the British Royal Navy, under orders from Captain Elliot, fired on Chinese war ships stationed in the harbor, then landed British soldiers onto Hong Kong soil. In 1842, in the aftermath of these and other actions, the British and the militarily weaker Chinese signed the Treaty of Nanking, which ceded Hong Kong to the British in perpetuity (Morris 1989, 15–18).

The British took control of Hong Kong in 1843, but military conflicts, which became known as the Opium Wars, did not cease until 1898, when the British and Chinese governments signed a ninety-nine-year lease that granted British sovereignty over Hong Kong, Weihaiwei, and Kowloon—the latter two were thereafter referred to as "the new territories." In effect, this lease brought peace to China's faltering kingdom and

gave Great Britain primacy over Hong Kong and the new territories until 1997 (Morris 1989, 18–19).

Hong Kong under British Dominion: A Matter of "the Haves" and "Have Nots"

By the turn of the twentieth century, British Hong Kong had become a thriving entrepôt. However, after a post-World War II (WWII) influx of Chinese industrialists,[1] Hong Kong's economy began to diversify into manufacturing, and each decade thereafter the focus of manufacturing changed. During the 1950s, fabrication was focused primarily on the production of textiles; in the late 1950s, continuing into the early 1960s, a large part of production was focused on plastic toys; and from the late 1960s into the early 1970s, Hong Kong factories moved into large-scale production of electronics products, particularly of watches (Young 1992, 25).[2]

Because Hong Kong had a constantly expanding, dynamic manufacturing base, the need for workers continued to increase, and with each passing decade millions of job-seeking immigrants came forth to fill that need. As a result of this migration, between 1941 and 1961 the number of people living in Hong Kong doubled (Taeuber 1963, 4–5).[3]

Though the large migration flows filled the need for workers, they created two major dilemmas. The first dilemma was an increased lack of available housing. Though the destruction wrought by Japan's occupation of Hong Kong during WWII had led to the

[1] This migrant group came to Hong Kong as a result of the successful 1949 Maoist revolution in China (Johnson 1966, 643).

[2] By the late 1970s, Hong Kong's economic focus had returned chiefly to that of an entrepôt. In the 1980s, however, it morphed once again, this time into that of one of Asia's great financial centers (Young 1992, 25).

[3] In 1941, there was an estimated 1.6 million inhabitants in Hong Kong. By 1961, the number had increased to 3.1 million (Taeuber 1963, 4–5).

disappearance of some housing, with or without that housing it would have been impossible to build enough housing for the growing population or to build it as quickly as it was needed (Johnson, 1966, 643–644). The second dilemma, an eventual overabundance of available workers, which eventually drove wages down (Koo 1968, 505), only aggravated the already urgent housing problem. The housing shortage, high housing prices based on supply and demand, and lowered wages worked together to drive many into the streets.

> How to feed, clothe and shelter the teeming population has become a formidable problem. In many other underdeveloped countries there is an abundance of land or other natural resources which can be exploited to meet the needs of the people. In Hong Kong there is no possibility of greatly expanding the primary production. With a total area of 398 square miles, predominantly hilly in nature, Hong Kong cannot expect to increase agricultural cultivation to any significant extent. Mining resources are also limited. Consequently, local primary production can offer little scope for the absorption of population increases. The only avenue open to Hong Kong is to establish a new economic frontier, i.e., industrialization. (Koo 1968, 505)

To a great extent, post-WWII Hong Kong had become a city of squatters who built shacks wherever they could find open space or vacancy. In turn, the large number of squatters led to unsanitary conditions, which served as a conduit to health risks, and these crowded, dangerous living conditions also contributed to occasional fires. In response to these problems, the local government began to enforce a resettlement program it created in the early 1950s.[4] However, the program did not provide enough soon enough to prevent a catastrophe. On December 25, 1953, a fire broke out in the large Shek Kip Mei community of squatters, in northern Kowloon, and destroyed it. In the wake of the fire, 50,000 squatters found themselves destitute (Johnson 1966, 643–644).

[4] Between 1951 and 1953, approximately 45,000 squatters were resettled or brought under administrative control through this program (Johnson 1966, 644).

A lack of housing wasn't the only socioeconomic problem afflicting the colony: there were no universal social programs to serve as a safety net. In fact, as late as the early 1980s, though there was a social security program, it was only somewhat available and, for the most part, to residents who were severely disabled or elderly. At year-end 1982, out of a population of more than five million people, a little more than five percent of the population was receiving disability and old age payments (Baker 1993, 864 and 868).

Though Hong Kong had a booming economy, into the 1980s the majority of Hong Kong residents worked in the service industries (hospitality and retail) and manufacturing (forty percent of the workforce worked in manufacturing [Baker 1993, 869]).[5] Despite the decades of prosperity for those at the top of Hong Kong's social and financial hierarchies, the living conditions for many had become those of impoverishment while others struggled to get into the middle class.

Education: The Key to Social Mobility in Hong Kong

The Chinese-speaking people have traditionally placed great value on education as a way to achieve social mobility (Cheng 1995, 264; Kember 2009, 170). In fact, education is at the heart of the family-centered social structure of Confucian teaching (Chaney 2011), and Hong Kong Chinese have long had an enormous appetite for it (Griffiths 1984, 547). Nevertheless, throughout Hong Kong's colonial history, obtaining a higher education was elusive to most residents because although it was a predominantly Chinese-populated

[5] As noted in footnote number three of his article, "unless otherwise indicated statistics are taken from the Hong Kong Government's Annual Report *Hong Kong 1993* or from earlier reports in the same series" (Baker 1993, 864).

city-state[6] and, therefore, the population was more or less Confucian, Hong Kong was ruled by the British who had incorporated a European educational system into the colony (Chaney 2011), which was an elite system.

Prior to WWII, the elite system of higher education was the standard of higher education throughout the world (Kember 2009, 167). Under the elite system, higher education was reserved, more or less, to those who were privileged by the circumstance of their birth, possessed a special talent, or in some cases, fell under both categories. Because higher education in an elite system is not open to many, it is believed to be a privilege, and the privilege is reserved for privileged members of a given society (Trow 1973, 7).

To get into the system, an applicant had to overcome a form of social inequality. First, prospective students would be expected to have attended one of a number of "accepted" elite preparatory schools (Trow 1973, 23). In this regard, Hong Kong residents who attended English-speaking private schools prior to university studies were likely to be at an advantage over those who attended Chinese-speaking private schools or, even more so, those who attended schools that Americans would call public schools (Chaney 2011). Second, a student was required to pass a series of extremely challenging public examinations, which served as a type of screening system (Poon and Wong 2008, 39–40).

The elite system of education was focused on the development of the minds and characters of its society's future rulers and professional leaders (e.g., academics,

[6] Approximately 98 percent of Hong Kong inhabitants were Chinese speakers (Tan 1997, 303).

bureaucrats, doctors, lawyers, politicians). In this regard, there was a great emphasis placed on the teacher-student relationship, which was believed to be essential to both the student's personal and academic development. As a result, it was left to the professor to determine what constituted an educated man or a well-prepared professional. To this end, the curriculum was based on a tutorial or seminar, which ensured a close working relationship between master and pupil (Trow 1973, 4–9, 14).[7]

Only after WWII did the concept of mass universal higher education begin to spread throughout the United States (Kember 2009, 167; Krugman 2012, 1), where a booming post-war economy created a demand for management positions occupied by workers with higher education degrees, and in western European countries[8] where centuries-old political and social orders had begun to change (Trow 2010, 557). During this time of growth and change in the United States and Western Europe, however, the era of elite education was still firmly ensconced in Hong Kong (Poon and Wang 2008, 35).[9]

During most of the colonial period (c. 1840 to 1997), Hong Kong had little to offer most residents who were in search of higher education. Even elite Hong Kong natives who might be accepted into a university program had few options from which to choose. The first and only university in the city, University of Hong Kong, a government-

[7] I use the pronoun "his" because the student would most likely have been male.

[8] In 1947, there were 14,000 students enrolled in Swedish universities. A little more than a decade later, the number of university students in Sweden had more than doubled, having grown to approximately 35,000. By 1965, Sweden's college student count had doubled again to 70,000, and by 1971 it had doubled again, with students making up approximately twenty-four percent of the relevant age group (Trow 1973, 4–5).

[9] The era of elite education in Hong Kong didn't begin to curtail until 1978 (Poon and Wang 2008, 35).

funded school, wasn't founded until 1911, and it was the only university in the colony until the 1956 founding of a private institution, Hong Kong Baptist University (formerly Hong Kong Baptist College). In 1963, a third university was founded, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, also a private university, followed by Lingnan College, in 1967, a third private school of higher education. In 1972, Hong Kong Polytechnic University (formerly the Hong Kong Polytechnic) was founded (Cheng 1995, 259).

Traditionally, only one to two percent of the population was accepted into the public university, University of Hong Kong, to which tuition was gratis. Ironically, the small minority of those accepted, unlike the majority who would not be accepted, had the means to pay for higher education (Chaney 2011). So, for most of the colonial era, British Hong Kong subjects who were unable to attend a university or college in their city had only one option for acquiring a higher education and, thus, to achieve greater financial and social mobility: to study abroad.

Conclusion

A British colony for approximately 150 years, with a predominantly Chinese-speaking population, Hong Kong had a culture that was more Confucian than European. When the 99-year lease expired in 1997, Great Britain, no longer an empire or a first-rate world power, thousands of miles away from its last major colonial holding, returned its sovereign right to Hong Kong to a commercially prosperous, militaristically powerful People's Republic of China.

During the final years of the island's colonial status, the local government made efforts to improve living conditions, but fell short of what was needed.

> Housing remains desperately short, the population having increased, at a million each decade, faster than even Hong Kong can build. Dreary slums abound—the first hasty public housing of the 1950s is slummy itself now—and here and there that grayish nebulous stain upon a hillside still marks the presence of a squatters' camp. There are beggars in the subway stations, street sleepers. … (Morris 1989, 258)

The local government also made efforts to improve higher education for Hong Kong residents. However, development was somewhat hampered by the fact that many were leaving the colony in anticipation of Hong Kong's return to China (Cheng 1995, 257). As a result, the number of Hong Kong students attending U.S. colleges and universities continued to increase, reaching a peak number of more than 14,000, during the 1992–1993 academic year (IIE 2011a, 1).[10]

Since its return to China, Hong Kong has taken many measures to improve local education. In 1999, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Education Commission proposed sweeping changes to its education system from elementary education to higher education. The aim of the changes, known as the "through-road" model, was to create greater equality and equity throughout the system by reforming the education system's academic structure, curriculum, assessment methods, instruction methods, criteria for admission, and teacher instruction and certification (Poon and Wong 2008, 35).

[10] The number of students coming from Hong Kong to the United States for an education peaked at approximately 14,000, during the 1992–1993 academic year. Figures for the 1995–1996 and 1996–1997 academic years (the latter was the last under British colonial administration) indicate that the number of students from Hong Kong attending U.S. colleges and universities decreased to 12,018 and then from 12,018 to 10,942 students, respectively. The number of students from Hong Kong studying at U.S. universities and colleges has never again gone as high as the number reached during the 1996–1997 level (IIE 2011a).

Toward the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, a four-year Fulbright program that was funded by Hong Kong philanthropist Po Chung made it possible for groups of American scholars to come to the city to offer consultations, workshops, and other forums on how to change the city's educational system to one more closely resembling the American system. This program was but one of many geared toward a restructuring of the secondary and tertiary educational systems at all eight universities that are now available to Hong Kong residents (Chaney 2011).

In Quest of a Dream: The Story of Wayne Lee

Prologue

"I came to the United States to get an education," said Hong-Kong-born Wayne Lee, who entered this country as a migrant student, in 1974, at the age of sixteen. "I attended a good high school in Hong Kong, but my grades wouldn't have been good enough for me to get into the university," he explained, referring to the rigorous admissions process that he would have endured trying to get into the only public university the British colony had to offer at that time. "I would likely have gotten into a technical school," he added, "but if not there, then I would not have been able to go to school at all."

Once in the United States, Lee was able to complete his high school education at a Catholic school, one of the best private schools in the region where he lived.

"I stayed with my second oldest sister and her husband, who taught at a local university," explained Lee, the second youngest of eleven children. "They helped a lot—financially, academically, and personally. I missed Hong Kong, my family, and my friends tremendously for the first two years. However, I wanted to leave Hong Kong to experience education in the United States."

He found that there were major differences between the American and Hong Kong education systems.

"The American system is more based on research," said Lee. "The Hong Kong system is based on memorization. At first, I didn't know what to do, so I just tried to do my best. The exam system in Hong Kong, was very good preparation."

In addition to having to adjust to a school system that was focused on a different type of achievement, he had to face another challenge: speaking the English language.

"My language ability was very poor at that time," said Lee. "I had gone to an English-language high school in Hong Kong, but the emphasis had been on reading and book learning more than on speaking. Because of my language problem, I was more science-oriented than language-oriented. Nevertheless," he added, "it was easy to make friends at school, and that surprised me."

Finding His *Tao*

While attending high school in the United States, Lee began to take guitar lessons. During his last year of high school, he became very serious about the instrument, which, in turn, would influence his decision about his next endeavor.

"When I decided to go to a university to study guitar as a music major, it was difficult for my family to accept this," said Lee, whose family did not see music as being a valid profession. "It took many years to convince my sister and brother-in-law that I was serious." However, the family outlook changed toward the end of his degree work, when he combined his major in guitar with a major in music composition. "They finally accepted it,"—the pursuit of music and of a music degree— "when I wrote my first string quartet."

Lee considers the circumstances under which he came to this country to have been extremely fortuitous ones. Nevertheless, he did have to adjust to some cultural differences.

"Coming from Hong Kong to a small town in the Midwest was a total change in my life. Hong Kong is a big city, very metropolitan, whereas my adopted hometown was, in comparison, a small city. In Hong Kong, everything goes 24/7, whereas in my new

hometown everything closed at 9 p.m. It is," he concluded, referring to his adopted city, "a calmer place.

"In Hong Kong, we lived in government housing. However, government housing in Hong Kong was nothing like public housing in the United States. It didn't necessarily indicate poverty. Probably seventy percent of the people lived in government housing. You had to purchase your apartment. If anyone rented one of the apartments," he added, "it was from someone who had purchased it."

Lee was unprepared, however, for some of the starker realities of American life. Shortly after he moved to the Midwest, his parents bought an apartment house as an investment, to which he was expected to move. His parents also expected him to manage the property.

"At first, it was a nice place to live. I had to manage the tenants, pay the bills, handle the finances, and contract or make the repairs. I was too young to manage it," he said of his many tasks. "I was 17 years old."

According to Lee, after about three years the neighborhood in which he lived went downhill and so did the quality of some of the people within it.

"One time when I approached a tenant about overdue rent," said Lee, "the tenant pulled a gun on me and said he was going to 'blow my ass off.' This was a new experience for me. In Hong Kong we had rich and poor neighborhoods, but we didn't have bad neighborhoods. Since that time, I have always tried to buy a house in a good neighborhood."

After graduating from the university with a music degree, Lee, who had been teaching guitar privately, developed back trouble. The pain was incessant and doctors

could find no remedy for it. The only time he felt comfortable was when he was in a standing position. The back problems made guitar teaching nearly impossible, which led him to search for a new profession.

"I had to go back to school," said Lee, who had little in the way of financial resources. "I had decided to study computer science, but I couldn't afford to do so."

In 1986, he entered the U.S. Army for a two-year stint. Upon signing with the military, he was given a $15,000 bonus.

"My military experience was very positive because of the physical training," said Lee. "I was in the best physical shape of my life. I met a lot of dedicated career soldiers, and I was very impressed by their professionalism. I was in a tank battalion as a supply person. My main job was to understand Army regulations on how to order supplies. Also, I managed the arms room for small weapons. I cherished the opportunities to see different parts of the country—Kentucky, New Jersey, and Georgia."

After completing his tour of duty, Lee was accepted into a computer science program at a prestigious Midwestern university. He used his $15,000 signing bonus to pay for schooling.

"The computer science program was very challenging," said Lee. "I had to study very hard. On many occasions I had to stay up all night long to complete projects before the deadlines."

The Immigrant Experience

"I did not come to the United States as a refugee," said Lee. "I came to this country on a student visa. Therefore, I didn't have to endure so much of the trauma that other immigrants do."

However, it wasn't always easy for him. Like many immigrants who come to this country during their youth, he had an interrupted upbringing: he didn't complete adolescence in his native culture, in a home environment surrounded by siblings; he didn't "come of age" with his peers; and he didn't come to maturity under his parents' guidance. In addition, in the United States, he had to assume adult responsibilities while still a boy.

"The stress of the situation made it difficult," he said, referring to the act of balancing the roles of landlord and building superintendent for his parents' investment property with that of student. "Being so busy—with work, with school—you don't get to meet other people, and when you're young—that's when you should. As a result, you need to grow up very quickly."

According to Lee, he has never experienced discrimination in this country. Nevertheless, because he is not of European descent, he has had some unusual experiences.

"In California [where he now lives], I don't have much issue with being Chinese. However, it was difficult when I attended the second university in the Midwest. Also, when I worked for about six months at a major corporation, in Indianapolis, I had a surprising experience. One day, during lunch with a coworker at a Chinese restaurant," he recounted with a chuckle, "another customer asked me a question because he thought that I worked there."

Lee has found a couple things about living in the United States to be difficult.

"Even though I've opened up to Americans, very few reciprocate that. I think they had trouble relating to me in the Midwest. It's not so bad in California. It's difficult being

Chinese culturally, and living in the United States," he continued. "I think all immigrants have this problem [i.e., relating to their new culture while being of another ethnic]. How do you go about being Chinese and being American?"

"The Hong Kong system," said Lee of the rigid colonial education system, "was a British-exam-based system. Also, besides the rigorous entry exam system, getting into the university had a lot to do with who you knew and how much money you had. The higher education system in the United States," he contrasted, "is the envy of the world. In the 70s and 80s, we thought it was the place to be.

"I feel that I was very fortunate to be able to come to the United States to study," said Lee upon final reflection. "Not long after coming to the United States. I knew that I wanted to stay here. There wasn't a time I thought about moving back to Hong Kong."

All three subjects in this study made their way to the United States because of forces that were beyond their control. Their stories, however, represent only a tiny fraction of similar stories that can be found in this community and other communities throughout the United States. Like so many other individuals who made their way to this country, and under similar circumstances, they have picked up the pieces of their lives and made the most of the opportunities available to them.

Though Emil Gilles is no longer in a management position, he was able to find work in a field related to his previous occupation. He has, with much sacrifice, been able to see one of his children through a university program and get two others started on a

similar path. He has also been able to ensure steady living conditions for his family, which, in turn, has made it possible for him to give back to the Michiana community.

After more than a decade of caring for other people's needs in the social work and health care industries, Francisco Marcos will soon achieve a lifelong dream. In May 2013, he will graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in Education. Since his move to the Michiana region, he has helped numerous Latino and other minority families through his volunteer work with several local organizations.

After spending most of his adult life in the Midwest, Wayne Lee settled in California. Nevertheless, his American roots are in Michiana, where he first arrived, spent his formative American years, and earned his university degrees. After working more than 20 years in the IT industry, he has returned to his first love—teaching guitar.

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Curriculum Vitae

Michael Snyder is a native of South Bend, Indiana. In 1981, he left the area to study music at The Catholic University of America (CUA), in Washington, D.C. He graduated from CUA's Benjamin T. Rome School of Music, in 1985, with a Bachelor's Degree in Music, with a concentration in vocal performance.

After graduating from CUA, he made his home in the nation's capital for the next twenty years. He worked as an assistant librarian and then as an administrator, both at CUA. From 1988 to 1995, he served as an administrator at the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, in the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, at Georgetown University. In 1995, he began a career in publications, working as a proofreader and editorial assistant at the Transportation Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences. From 1999 to 2002, he served as firmwide editor, writer, and proposal coordinator for the law firm Akin, Gump, Straus, Hauer & Feld, L.L.P. In 2003, he assumed the position of managing editor of two journals at the American Educational Research Association. During his last two years in the national capital area, he worked as a freelance writer and editor.

Throughout his time in Washington, he gave recitals; appeared as tenor soloist in operas, operettas, oratorios, and music theater productions; and performed in area churches. He also acted and sang in experimental theater productions.

Michael Snyder has been a published writer since 1999, when he began writing marketing articles for the hospitality, meetings, and travel industries. Since his 2005 return to South Bend, he has written arts pieces for *The South Bend Tribune*, composed and presented commentaries on National Public Radio (WVPE), and has had two short

stories published, "Two Sisters," in *New Views on Gender*, and "Taps for John Harris," in *Confluence: The Journal of Graduate Liberal Studies*. He teaches English as a new language for The Language Company and for the Adult Education department of the South Bend Community Schools Corporation.

In addition to his degree from CUA and his Master of Liberal Studies degree from Indiana University South Bend, he took acting classes at the Folger Shakespeare Library (Washington, D.C.) and studied voice and vocal repertoire with Nancy Evans and Eric Crozier (Aldeburgh, England). He studied French, German, and Italian, and continues to develop his Spanish-language skills. He is a volunteer for La Casa de Amistad and Radio Sabor Latino, in South Bend, and is vice president of the board member of the Hispanic Leadership Coalition.